NCRR: A Catalyst for Discovery

Center for Scientific Review
National Institutes of Health

Summary Statements
For Research Resource Applications

A Summary Statement capturing the essence of the review will be prepared after the meeting. This document enables both the applicant and NCRR program personnel to understand the reasons for the criticisms and priority score. The entire Summary Statement is usually about 20-30 pages long. Reviewers should prepare preliminary written critiques prior to the study section meeting; it is best if panel members bring both a hard copy and an electronic version (on a high-density floppy disk).

A ***Resume*** (of the panel's deliberations) is prepared by the Scientific Review Administrator.

The applicant's abstract is included verbatim as the overall ***Description*** of the project.

An ***Overall Critique*** is drafted by the Chair of the study section. This may be modified immediately after the review to incorporate comments from other panelists. It should summarize the general strengths and weaknesses of the proposal (based on the unique aspects of the NCRR research resource program), and include the panel's rationale for arriving at its final level of enthusiasm.

Technological Research and Development. Two or more reviewers are assigned to each of the projects in this section. The applicant should provide an abstract for each project, which is used *verbatim*. The scientific critique should evaluate strengths and weaknesses of the proposed research, and the qualifications and contributions of the key investigators. For a revised application, it is desirable to discuss changes in the amended version. For a renewal proposal, it may be appropriate to consider progress during the previous funding period. It is helpful if a concluding paragraph summmarizes the deciding factors for the critique.

The ideal critique for a core project is usually about one page long. Immediately after the study section meets the primary reviewer for a project will combine all reviews for that project and incorporate salient points made in discussion. The draft, "blended" critique is ultimately read back to the panel for additional comments.

Colloborative Research. This section can be extensive because there often are many collaborations. The writen comments should reflect the philosophy underlying the collaborative research projects; namely, all collaborations should either advance or test the technology being developed by the proposed resource. If there are a large number of projects, reviewers may be assiged to groups. Each assigned reviewer should identify the collaborators' sources of support, describe the collaboration in one or a few sentences, and write a short critique. Reviewers are not expected to review extensively the science of the collaborative projects which, after all, are usually already funded. The essence of the critique should be the relevance of the collaboration to the technology of the resource - that is, how the collaboration drives, and is driven, by the resource core projects. Draft "blended" critiques are read back to the panel for additional comments.

Service. The applicant should provide a summary description of service projects, which will be used verbatim. The critique of the service activities need not be extensive. It should assess ease and fairness of access and whether the project is an example of a good use of the technology under development. For new applications, the plans for service should be evaluated. The combined draft critique is read back to the panel for additional comments.

Training. Describe (briefly) and critique educational programs of the resource (usually a paragraph will suffice); a new application should have, at a minimum, suitable plans for training. Assess the national significance of these activities. Note that "training" here refers to specific training in the technology, not a generalized experience for graduate students or postdocs. A blended critique is read back to the panel for comment.

Dissemination. In a paragraph or so, critique mechanisms (or, for a new project, plans) for technology transfer to both expert and non-expert communities via publications, meetings, commercialization, and the Internet. The draft review is read back to the panel for additional input.

Administrative. Assess the arrangements to promote planning and interaction. Evaluate whether plans exist for succession of the investigators and whether the advisory committee is suitable. Evaluate the institutional setting and support, and any other significant factors. The draft critique is read back to the panel for comments.

Budget. The budget is to be addressed after the scientific review is complete. It is important to consider whether each project is appropriately budgeted. The idea is not to nickel and dime the proposed budget, but the bottom line should make sense. Consider especially carefully personnel and big ticket items like equipment. Recommended budgets are decided by consensus, with assigned reviewers usually leading the discussion for their components.

Animal and Human Subject Welfare. Any comments or concerns are incorporated into the Summary Statement and are specifically brought to the attention of program personnel.

Additional Comments. As indicated above, a successful resource must be engaged in five activities: technological research and development, collaborative research, service, training, and dissemination, usually in that order of importance. An odd distinction is that the resource investigators can collaborate with themselves; e.g., if they are using the resource to enrich their own R01 research (and presumably test the new P41 technique), it is a collaborative project. The core research (technological research and development) must be research on developing the technique (not just using it).

The projects served by the resource must involve a variety of NIH research areas. If narrow in scope, e.g., all cancer research, support should be sought from a specific institute, such as NCI.

A proposed resource is expected to be a national resource. It is entirely appropriate for the panel to indicate whether the users are predominantly local.